

## **On The Association for Children at Risk Letterhead**

October 2022

### **Summary of the 2021-2022 “From Calculations to Integrations” Course – Our Third Class of Graduates**

The third class of the “From Calculations to Integrations” course began its studies at the beginning of November 2021.

8 Students were accepted to the course after an hour-long interview which was followed by a professional examination.

Over the course of 5 months, the students studied from 9:00 until 13:00, 4 days a week. Two days a week they studied professional material, in accordance with BDO Finance Academy’s criteria, which was taught by a lecturer on its behalf, and two days a week the participants received tools to fully exhaust their potential for independence and acquired workplace-related skills and abilities which were provided by professional staff from the Autism Research and Treatment Center.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March, the 8 participants successfully completed the course and received a diploma issued jointly by the BDO Finance Academy and the Autism Research and Treatment Center.

This year’s course was characterized by the need to combine face-to-face learning alongside remote online learning, due to the 5<sup>th</sup> wave of COVID-19, making it necessary for the professional staff from the BDO Finance Academy and from the Autism Research and Treatment Center to dynamically make accommodations and changes to the teaching methods.

#### **The National Insurance Institute**

The National Insurance Institute (NII) recognizes the “From Calculations to Integration” course as a pre-rehabilitation program. This year the NII also recognized the importance of our assistance to the graduating students in finding proper placement. This is reflected in a number of channels of support:

- Tuition – the student’s part of the course tuition (15,854 NIS) is funded by the NII for NII-recognized students.
- Parent Groups – In order to create a process of reducing adults’ dependency on their parents and promoting independence towards entering the workforce, it is important to also work with the parents, as inclusion agents. Therefore, the NII is now funding 10 sessions for the parents of the course’s participants. These sessions were held on ZOOM and led by an NII rehabilitation worker and a social worker from the course’s staff. At each session, the parents were given a psycho-educational explanation of material that the students had covered in their course as preparation for the employment arena, and also had time for sharing and implementing the material covered.
- The “Accompaniment Through Placement” program – Each graduate who is interested in integrating into a workplace that corresponds with the professional knowledge that they acquired, enters into an “interim stage” which includes interviewing for jobs and integrating into a workplace. This stage requires patience, the ability to cope with uncertainty and with disappointments alongside accomplishments, adjusting to changes and more. The “Accompaniment Through Placement” program offers focused and designated professional accompaniment in order to help the participants successfully get through this stage, so that at the end of the process, it will be possible to find them the position that optimally meets their aspirations and skills. The NII has recognized the importance of this program by fully funding it in the amount of NIS 2,578 per month of accompaniment, for the duration of six months.

## On The Association for Children at Risk Letterhead

### 8 Participants Began and Successfully Completed the Course:

1. **A.D.** is 22 years old and lives with his family in Ra'anana. He was diagnosed with autism at the age of 15. He studied in small classes in mainstream educational frameworks. Until the course started, he worked in odd jobs. Throughout the entire course, A. diligently attended all the lessons. About a month into the course, the staff noticed that he was experiencing difficulty understanding the professional curriculum and he was beginning to fall behind. In response, a BDO Finance Academy lecturer sat with A. an additional hour each week and A. ultimately submitted the final assignment and successfully completed the course. At the beginning of the life skills sessions during the course, the communication difficulties were evident. As time progressed, A. became more exposed to the interaction with the other students and began to undergo a significant process of acquiring and developing social skills. A. has continued to the subsequent "Accompaniment Through Placement" program.
2. **A.R.** is 34 years old. He is a member of the "Inbalim" residential framework in Hadera and lives in his own apartment. He was diagnosed with autism at the age of 19. He attended mainstream educational frameworks and completed 12 years of school with a matriculation certificate. He works as a musician. A. diligently attended all the lessons throughout the entire course, despite the distance from his home. Professionally, A. participated and demonstrated very high academic abilities. At the beginning of the sessions that addressed life skills and soft skills, A. demonstrated resistance to participating and sharing. But with time, and with personal discussions, A. managed to moderate his resistance. A. has continued to the subsequent "Accompaniment Through Placement" program and as of June he is employed by a Taxation Consultancy firm.
3. **D.H.** is 24 years old. He lives in the "Yedidya" hostel in Mevaseret Zion. He was diagnosed with autism at the age of 22. He attended special education frameworks. He did not manage to complete 12 years of school. He served for one year in national service and currently works as a supermarket warehouse worker. D. is a very positive and smiley young man who enjoys the academic framework and the social interactions. It was already evident at the beginning of the course that D. was having difficulty understanding the professional curriculum that was being taught by the BDO Finance Academy, and about a month into the studies, D. received an additional hour each week from the lecturer. D. is a pleasant and kind person who speaks calmly and politely. He actively participated in the life skills and emotional regulation lessons and found a way to express his feelings and opinions in the conversations that were held. D. has continued to the "Accompaniment Through Placement" program. As of June, he is being employed at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem, at the Digitization Department.
4. **Y.S.** is 31 years old. He lives with his family in Ramat Gan. He was diagnosed with autism at the age of 31 (3 months before the course began). He attended mainstream educational frameworks and completed 12 years of school with a matriculation certificate. He enlisted to military service and completed his full course of service. Y. reached the course with prior financial knowledge and with a lot of motivation and desire to continue to enrich his knowledge in this field. Y. would explain the professional material to the other students to help them understand. He actively participated and shared and knew how to advocate for himself. Throughout the course it was very evident that Y. had a strong desire to learn and to overcome his social anxieties, by implementing the models and internalizing the content that was taught in the life skills lessons. Y. has continued to the "Accompaniment Through Placement" program. As of September, Y is employed in a library in Tel Aviv University.
5. **M.L.** is 21 years old. She lives with her family in Bat Yam. She was diagnosed with autism at the age of 3. She studied in small classes in mainstream educational frameworks. She completed 12 years of school, with a matriculation certificate. She volunteered for two years of national service. At the beginning of the course, M. had several concerns about being the only female, but very quickly these concerns disseminated, and M. stood out as an initiator and a social leader who participates, shares and helps her co-participants with summaries and explanations relating to the material that was covered in the course, and creates a pleasant

### On The Association for Children at Risk Letterhead

atmosphere among all the course participants. M. has continued to the “Accompaniment Through Placement” program. As of July, M is working at the Tax Consultant’s Association (לשכת יועצי המס)

6. **A.S.** is 32 years old. He lives in his own apartment in Rishon Lezion. He was diagnosed with autism at the age of 16. He attended mainstream educational frameworks but did not complete 12 years of school. He volunteered for one year of national service. He worked in odd jobs. A. began the course without believing in himself and in his ability to succeed in the course. When the staff saw that A. was having difficulty understanding the professional curriculum and that he was falling behind, he was offered an additional hour per week which he received until the end of the course. A. had a very strong desire and high motivation to succeed, he integrated socially and created a pleasant atmosphere. A. has continued to the “Accompaniment Through Placement” program. He will start working after the holidays.
7. **A.L.** is 22 years old. He lives in the “*Yedidya*” hostel in Mevaseret Zion. He was diagnosed with autism at the age of 13. He studied in special education classes. He completed 12 years of school with a matriculation certificate and volunteered for two years of national service. During the professional classes it was evident that A. was applying great efforts to understand and internalize the curriculum. A short time into the course, A. was offered an additional hour per week by the lecturer and he happily accepted such offer. A. is a pleasant young man with high social conversation skills. A. actively participated and shared during the life skills lessons and significantly contributed to the atmosphere in the course and would always volunteer to help whenever needed. A. has continued to the “Accompaniment Through Placement” program.
8. **T.D.** is 22 years old. He lives with family in Rishon Lezion. He was diagnosed with autism at the age of 19. He attended mainstream educational frameworks and completed 12 years of school with a full matriculation certificate. He served in the military for one year. Throughout the course T. understood and internalized the professional content matter that was taught by the BDO Finance Academy lecturer. T. has high academic abilities which were evident throughout the entire course. T. is a pleasant and polite young man. During the sessions that addressed life skills and soft skills, it was evident that he was conducting a complicated internal dialog with himself about his self-identification as a person diagnosed with autism. T. has continued to the “Accompaniment Through Placement” program. As of September, he is working at the Rishon Le’zion Municipality.